

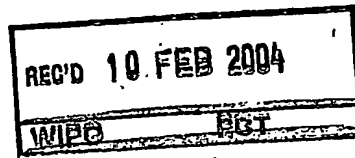


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20 JUN 2005



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



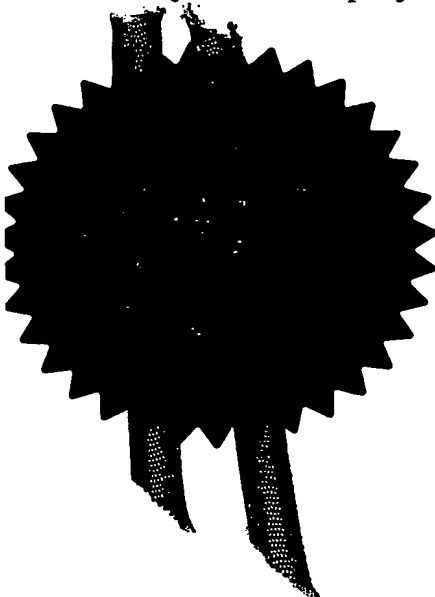
The Patent Office
Concept House
Cardiff Road
Newport
South Wales
NP10 8QQ

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THE PATENT OFFICE
B
21 DEC 2002
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27 DEC 02 E77342-7 000350
P01/7700 0:00-0229968.3

Request for grant of a patent

(See the notes on the back of this form. You can also get an explanatory leaflet from the Patent Office to help you fill in this form)

The Patent Office

Cardiff Road
Newport
South Wales
NP10 8QQ

1. Your reference

BQ/PM/P/22002.GB

2. Patent application number

(The Patent Office will fill in this part)

21 DEC 2002

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (*underline all surnames*)

07612997001

Patents ADP number (*if you know it*)

IGT-UK LIMITED,
MARGARET STREET,
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE,
LANCASHIRE.
OL7 0QQ.

0229968.3

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

UNITED KINGDOM

4. Title of the invention

GAMING MACHINE

5. Name of your agent (*if you have one*)

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (*including the postcode*)

WILSON GUNN M'CAW,
41-51 ROYAL EXCHANGE,
CROSS STREET,
MANCHESTER,
M2 7BD.

Patents ADP number (*if you know it*)

7153927001 ✓

6. If you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or of each of these earlier applications and (*if you know it*) the or each application number

Country

Priority application number
(*if you know it*)

Date of filing
(*day / month / year*)

7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application

Number of earlier application

Date of filing
(*day / month / year*)

8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request? (*Answer 'Yes' if:*

YES

- a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
 - b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
 - c) any named applicant is a corporate body.
- See note (d))

Patents Form 1/77

9. Enter the number of sheets for any of the following items you are filing with this form. Do not count copies of the same document

Continuation sheets of this form

Description 10

Claim(s)

Abstract

Drawing(s) 1

1

1

10. If you are also filing any of the following, state how many against each item.

Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (*Patents Form 7/77*)

Request for preliminary examination and search (*Patents Form 9/77*)

Request for substantive examination (*Patents Form 10/77*)

Any other documents
(please specify)

11.

I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature

Wilson

Date 20/12/02

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

Mr. B. Quest - 0161-827-9400

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Notes

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- b) Write your answers in capital letters using black ink or you may type them.
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GAMING MACHINE

This invention relates to player-operable coin-operated gaming machines of the kind, which may be referred to as 'slot' or 'fruit' or 'poker' machines, having a main display device operable in play of a main game for displaying a selected combination of symbols at a win zone, which device has a plurality of symbol sequences which index through the win zone to provide a moving symbol display and then come to rest to cause the selected combination of symbols to be displayed, an award being made available to the player in the event that the selected combination is any of a range of predetermined winning combinations. As used herewith the term coin is intended also to cover notes, tokens, charge or credit cards or any other means of supplying credit or monetary value.

The main display device of such slot machines typically comprises multiple side-by-side actual or video simulated reels which are rotatable about a common horizontal axis within a housing behind a window at the win zone, the sequences of symbols being provided at equally spaced positions around the peripheries of the reels. When at rest one or more symbols of each reel may be displayed through the window on one or more win lines and, if the displayed combination of symbols on the (or any) win line is of a predetermined winning nature an award in the form of a cash payout or other prize is made available to the player.

It is well known for bonus events to be offered to the player to

enhance the player's enjoyment of the machine. These may take the form of bonus games which are relatively simple and offer little player interaction. Typically the player is given the opportunity to choose one of a number of hidden prizes. Once a selection has been made all the prize values are revealed to the player. This provides only passing amusement and involves no exercise of skill or strategy.

An object of the present invention is to provide bonus events which can afford enhanced playing enjoyment.

According to the invention therefore there is provided a player-operable coin operated gaming machine of the kind having a main display device operable in play of a main game for displaying a selected combination of symbols at a win zone, which device has a plurality of symbol sequences which index through the win zone to provide a moving symbol display and then come to rest to cause the selected combination of symbols to be displayed, and wherein bonus events are made available on at least some occasions in relation to said main games, characterised in that said bonus events influence determination of said predetermined winning combinations, and when made available at least one of said bonus events is player-selectable from a range of such events to be effective for a plurality of games.

With this arrangement, the player can derive much entertainment value in so far as he is able to interact with win determination and can plan a strategy effective over a number of games.

The bonus events may be made available on any suitable predetermined, random or pseudo random basis in correspondence with or independent of any other appropriate event. In one embodiment the bonus events may be made available after a symbol combination of a predetermined nature has been selected and displayed at the win zone, 5 e.g. when the combination includes one or more special symbols, particularly when a special symbol is displayed for each symbol sequence.

When available, the player may be able to select one or more bonus events, preferably one, and this may be achieved by operating a press 10 button or touch screen or other control in relation to a displayed list of available bonus events.

The number of games for which the (or each) selected bonus event is effective may be predetermined, or may be determined automatically by the machine on any predetermined random or pseudo random basis, or 15 may be selectable by the player using a suitable control preferably within a predetermined range. By way of example, the selected bonus event may be effective for 10 games.

A count down display or other indication may be provided to indicate to the player the current number of remaining bonus event 20 games.

A limitation may be imposed on the selected number of bonus event games whereby only games for which pre-existing game-playing credit can be included. Alternatively the number of bonus-event games

may be greater than the number for which game-playing credit is already available.

With regard to the bonus events, by way of example these may comprise or include any one of more of the following:

- 5 1. All wins doubled;
2. Any win with a specified symbol in the combination (e.g. a 'bar' symbol) awards a minimum prize value (e.g. 50 credits)
3. A 'wild' symbol in the selected symbol combination increases the normal award value (e.g. multiplies by 7).
- 10 4. A symbol combination which is not normally a winning combination (e.g. all symbols are 'blanks') gives an award, particularly a predetermined award (e.g. 20 credits).
5. A single predetermined symbol in the selected symbol combination (e.g. a 'cherry' symbol) gives an award, particularly
- 15 a predetermined award (e.g. 60 credits).

The symbols of the sequences may be of any suitable kind. In particularly preferred embodiment the machine is a casino 'slot' or 'fruit' machine and the symbols include bars, blanks and cherries, and the bars may be 3 bar, 2 bar and 1 bar sets.

20 Thus, in one example, a mixed combination of bars (e.g. 2 Bar, 2 Bar, 1 Bar) may usually pay a small award, say 5 credits. With selection of the above bonus event No. 2, the player could be assured that the mixed bar combination would give a minimum award value over

the remaining bonus event games, say 50 credits.

In another example, using a typical casino machine with blanks between other symbols (e.g. Red 7 – blank – 3 Bar – blank – 2 Bar – blank and so on) a combination of all blanks would not usually give any award, but selection of the above bonus event No. 4 could give an award of say 20 credits.

The arrangement may be such that the player can select only one bonus event which is then maintained effective as the only bonus event for all of the relevant games whereby no further option to select bonus events arises until after all of the relevant games have been played. Other arrangements are however also possible. The player may have the option of selecting more than one bonus event on one occasion and these may be effective for the same or different number of games. Alternatively or additionally the player may have the opportunity of selecting one (or possibly more) bonus events on one occasion, and may have a further opportunity in a subsequent game whilst the first-selected bonus event (or events) is still effective. In this latter case the result may be that the two (or more) selections run simultaneously or the second selection may arise after the first selection has ceased to be effective. There may even be the possibility for the player to make the same selection a second time whilst the first selection is still effective whereby this may prolong the number of games over which the selection is effective or otherwise enhance or modify the first selection.

Where two or more bonus events are effective simultaneously resulting awards may be cumulative or otherwise interact with each other. Thus, for example, where above bonus events No. 1 and No. 5 are both effective and both result in awards, the single symbol win would be double the special predetermined award e.g. 120 credits could results.

Especially where different bonus events can be effective simultaneously, individual display devices, such as alphanumeric display devices may be provided to indicate the availability of the events.

The symbol sequences may be provided on mechanical reels or video simulations thereof and there may be three side-by-side sequences e.g. provided by three reels rotatable on a common horizontal axis. Other devices and configurations are also possible.

The invention will now be described further by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic front elevation of one form of a gaming machine according to the invention;

Figure 2 is a block circuit diagram of the machine; and

Figure 3 shows an enlarged detailed view of a display region of the machine.

Referring to Figure 1, this shows a gaming machine in the form of a slot machine having a housing 1 with a front wall 2 having a main display panel 3, a coin slot 4, operating buttons 5, and a payout opening 6.

The main display panel 3 defines a window 7 through which the

peripheries of three side by side reels 8 rotatably mounted about a common horizontal axis can be seen.

The reels are drivably mounted on respective stepper motors 9.

5 Beneath the window 7, as shown in Figure 3, there are five small windows 10 through which can be seen respective LED or LCD alphanumeric displays 11. Immediately above each window 10 there is a printed indication 12 of a respective bonus event.

10 As shown in Figure 2, the motors 9 are connected to a microprocessor based control unit 13 within the housing as also is a coin mechanism 14 linked to the slot 4, a payout mechanism 15 leading to the opening 6, the operating buttons 5, and the alphanumeric displays 11.

15 The reels 8 have symbol bands around their peripheries which are printed with symbols at equally spaced intervals, say at 20 or 24 positions. The symbols may include 'bars' (3 bar, 2 bar, 1 bar), blanks, the number 7 coloured red, and 'cherry' symbols.

20 The stepper motors 9 index the reels 8 step by step to bring the symbols successively into sight in the window 7 as a moving display. When at rest each reel 8 has one symbol on a central win line 16 and two further symbols can be seen above and below this symbol. Alternatively, at rest, only one symbol may be visible in the window 7 on the win line 16 for each reel 8.

The combination of three symbols on the win line 16 is matched, at the end of a game, with a list of predetermined winning combinations

shown on a display 17 on the front panel 3.

In use, the player inserts coins into the slot 4 sufficient to provide credit for at least one game and a game can be played by pressing a start button 5. The reels 8 then rotate for different periods of time under the control of the unit 13 and come to rest to display on the win line 16 a randomly selected symbol combination.

This combination is assessed by the unit 13 and if it matched one of the predetermined winning combinations a predetermined prize award, as shown on the display 17 is made available to the player and can be paid out through the opening 6.

On occasions, as determined under the control of the unit 13, on a predetermined, random or pseudo random basis, the selected combination includes a special 'bonus event' symbol, or combination of such symbols, and this triggers availability of a bonus event selection procedure. The player can now select one of the five bonus events shown on the five indications 12, by means of the controls, e.g. by pressing a button under any one of the indications 12. This causes the respective alphanumeric display 11 to be actuated to show a predetermined number of games, say 10.

The player can now play 10 games, in the usual way after establishing credit for the games, but with the respective bonus event effective in each of the games.

As the games are played the alphanumeric display 11 decrements

correspondingly to zero and the bonus event then terminates.

During play of the 10 games, a bonus event selection opportunity may again arise. The player can then select one of the bonus events. If the player selects a different bonus event, the respective alphanumeric display 11 shows 10 games. The two bonus events are now effective at the same time, until the 10 games are consumed for the first bonus event whereupon only the second event is effective until the 10 games for that have been consumed.

It may be possible for any number of bonus events, up to all five, to be effective simultaneously.

The player also may have the opportunity of selecting the same event again before the 10 games have been consumed in relation to its first selection. In that case, an additional 10 games is credited and is shown on the alphanumeric display 11.

By way of example, and as shown in the drawing the five bonus events may be as follows:

All Wins Doubled

Any Bar Win Pays 50 Credits Minimum

Wild Symbol multiplies win x7

Three Blanks Pay 20 Credits

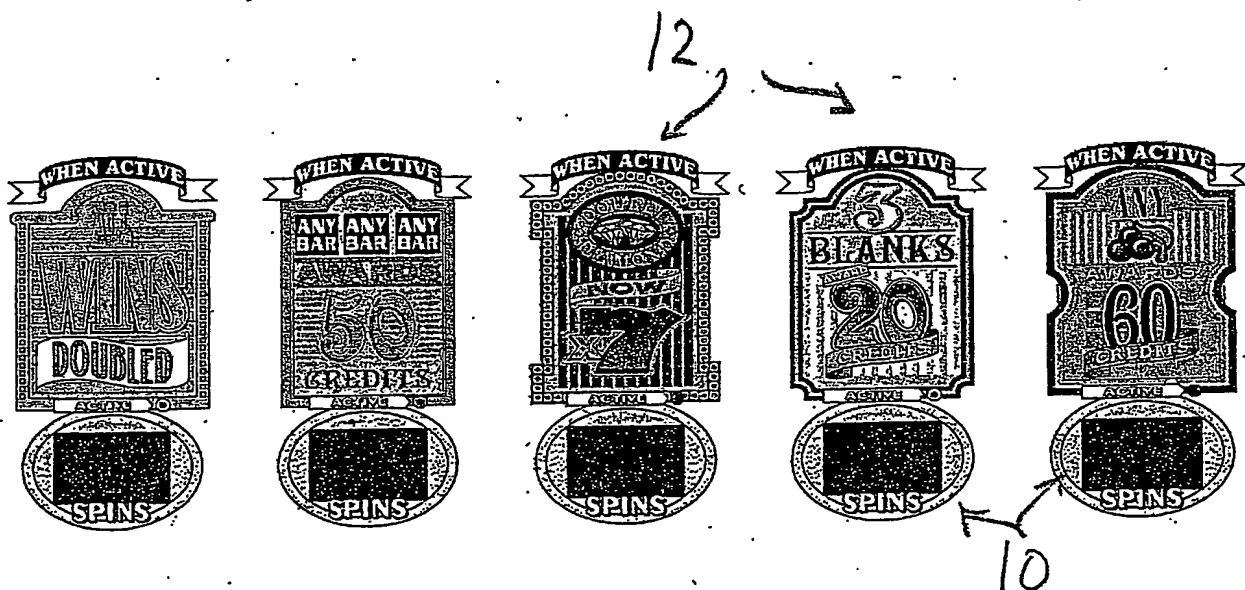
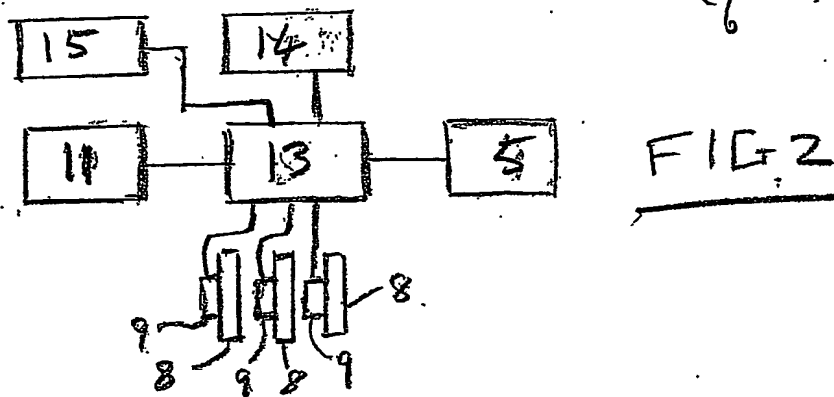
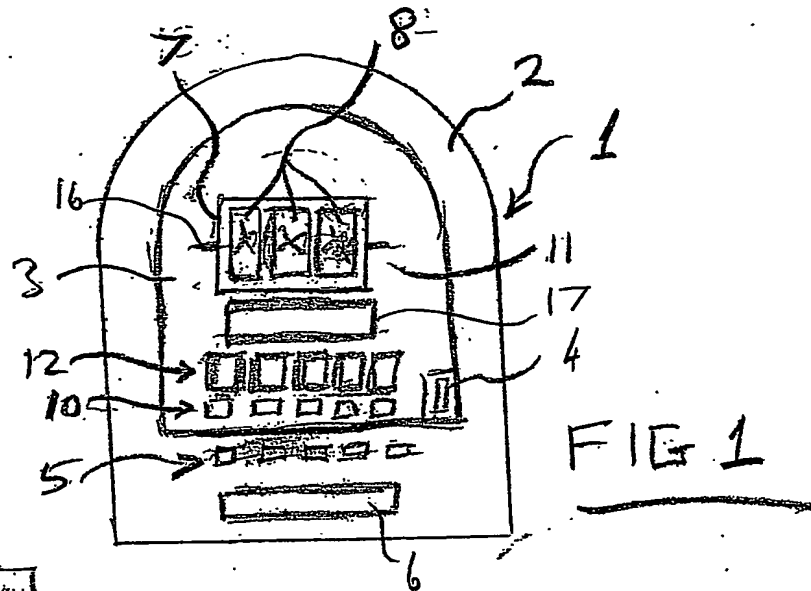
Single Cherry Win Pays 60 Credits

These bonus events all apply to enhancement of symbol selections of the reels.

With the above embodiment the player has the opportunity of increased interaction with symbol combination win determination and can plan a strategy effective over 10 or more future games.

This gives rise to enhanced player enjoyment.

- 5 It is of course to be understood that the invention is not intended to be restricted to the details of the above embodiment which are described by way of example only.



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PCT Application
PCT/GB2003/005587

